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FRENCH COURSE OF STUDY

French is a living language and should be taught as such; realizing these facts, the department of French in the University High and Elementary Schools endeavors to render French as practicable as possible. Such a method stimulates the student's interest and desire to learn.

The University High School and the Elementary School offer courses in French which lead to four units of college entrance credit.

There is, first, a course which begins in the fourth grade of the Elementary School. By the end of the seventh grade students have completed the requirements for one unit of college entrance credit. The pupils from the Elementary School upon entering the High School are grouped together in a class called French 8, which is adapted to their special needs and is planned to continue their previous work. French 8 is on a linguistic level with the High School second-year work, uses the same material and has the same grammatical background; yet the class atmosphere developed in the Elementary School is very carefully conserved, as will be shown in the statement for French II and French 8. This group is maintained as a separate entity and called French 9 while completing the third unit of college entrance credit. At the end of that year the Elementary School course joins with the regular High School course in a class known as French 4, which completes the fourth unit of entrance credit.

The regular High School course which has just been mentioned comprises the second division and starts in the first year of the High School. The first two years (which are taken by students

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who have not had the elementary course) are devoted to the acquisition of the language. The third year is devoted to a study of French literary types. The fourth year begins with a short survey of French literary history and then studies in detail the Romantic school of French literature.

AIMS AND VALUES

The aim of the study of French is to learn to speak, to write, and to read French for practical purposes as well as for literary study and appreciation. It is obviously unnecessary to develop at length the value of the study of French. It possesses, of course, disciplinary value, as does the study of any language. In addition to this, as Professor Nitze has aptly said, "Solid training in pronunciation by phonetic methods. . . will develop the student's capacity for articulation in general, his auditory perception, his observation and judgment."* The practical significance of this point has been recently shown by the fact that men in the officers' training camps were refused commissions because of their inability to enunciate distinctly.

The study of French has, however, a special utility. It is indispensable for travel and service abroad. Moreover, its extensive use in technical and scientific works makes a knowledge of it necessary for prospective specialists in any advanced study. Even more interesting is its growing commercial use, as attested by the fact that large American corporations are instituting classes in French for their employees. The cultural value of a knowledge of French has been even more largely recognized than its utilitarian importance. It brings the student into contact with a civilization which has afforded a model for Western Europe since the Middle Ages. More specifically, the student becomes acquainted with a literature whose form and construction have reached the highest degree of perfection. Finally, the careful study of a different idiom develops the linguistic sense and produces, as perhaps its most valuable result, a keener appreciation of the mother tongue.

GENERAL METHOD

Until recent years the teaching of French in the United States has been modeled on the method employed in the teaching of Latin

*University of Chicago Magazine, Vol. 4, 1912, page 98.

and this method is still generously used. The usual procedure was to present grammar principles formulated as rules and amplified by examples followed by a vocabulary and a reading lesson. To make matters worse, the words of the vocabulary combined to make no coherent group, but a heterogeneous mass of vocables.

This process is evidently artificial, since it is far removed from the way languages are naturally acquired. In learning his own language the child first hears sound groups and gradually associates them with objects and actions. In time he begins to combine these groups of sounds or words to express his thoughts and desires. From his practice in combining words he gradually acquires the habit of correct grammatical usage.

Any rational system of teaching a living language will reproduce this process as far as classroom conditions permit. The Direct Method as used by the French department of the University High and Elementary Schools aims to do just this. In following out this plan it has made a systematic arrangement of the material to be presented. The concrete details of this arrangement will be made clear in the following survey of the course of study.

FRENCH IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Introductory Statement

The French course in the Elementary School begins in the fourth grade and continues through the seventh grade. Five half-hour periods a week are devoted to class-work with home-work assignments of two half-hours a week in the fifth and sixth grades and five half-hours a week in the seventh grade.

The course aims:

To enable the pupil to understand ordinary spoken French.

To teach him to use with a reasonable amount of freedom, the simple forms of daily intercourse both oral and written.

To teach him to read simple French with understanding.

To train him to look for the grammatical laws underlying the forms learned, and to apply the rules thus discovered to daily practice.

To teach him to observe sound and rhythm as well as form, and to develop in him a feeling for correct and accurate pronunciation and sentence rhythm.

To acquaint him with the spirit of the French nation through folk-lore, folk-songs, legends, and traditions.

To so present each lesson that the pupil may be given a permanent enthusiasm that will lead him to continue the study.

At nine years of age, the child has no concern with the structure of language. He wants to say things and to understand what is said, and the course that is planned without consideration for this phase of his development will fail to appeal to him. He is not interested in separate words or their relations. He is concerned in expressing his own thoughts, and in understanding those of other people. Therefore, as rich a background as possible of simple French is offered so as to give him a broad experience in simple conversation, reading, and writing. From this, as a basis, the sense of form is gradually developed while maintaining the spontaneity and enthusiasm which come from being steeped in the language rather than standing outside looking in as an observer upon certain forms and structures peculiar to it. This does not mean that the instruction is haphazard or that grammatical considerations are overlooked. Grammar is taught, but it is taught slowly. Each year a limited number of points are taken up and are studied until each child is thoroughly familiar with them. Therefore it takes four years to cover the first year high school requirement in grammar; but, in addition, the pupil is given a mass of subject matter which enlarges his comprehension of the French nation, enriches his appreciation of the language, intensifies his enthusiasm for it and slowly develops real language feeling, that sense of what is natural and correct in form, which comes from early association, long experience and thorough understanding.

The *point de départ* in the early instruction is the classroom setting, combined with actions, games, songs, songs involving action, pictures, and very simple, very short stories. The child's vocal organs are still flexible, he is still imitative, he loves sounds for their own sake, and he is not self-conscious; it is easy to plunge him into the language and get him at once to make the effort to learn to speak. He feels no embarrassment in trying to use the new tongue. French is the language of the classroom and he adjusts himself to the new situation. From the first, careful attention is given to sound placing, ear training and rhythm, and the pupil is drilled to say such little sentences as he learns, fluently, with the correct intonation, and without halting and hesitating. Some work in phonetics is done from the start. Even in the fourth grade, the vowel triangle and the phonetic script have proved valuable aids in the teaching of pronunciation.

The keynote of the work is simplicity. The material is presented so slowly, so clearly and so simply that the child is not overwhelmed by the strangeness of it or made hopeless by the sight of the mountain of difficulties before him. He is given some skill right from the beginning in order to arouse his interest, and then the steps are so gradual that he does not lose confidence. The subject-matter is given him to work on alone, only after there has been such preparation of it in class that his study at home is mainly a review. Everything is gone over so thoroughly that the pupil when by himself does not have to waste time puzzling over a lesson. The difficulties are removed by class discussion, so that his study period may be utilized in profitable, constructive work. This elementary work must be of the heart as well as the mind, for one remembers most easily that which one loves. If the children find joy in the work, there is almost no limit to the effort they will expend upon it.

The elementary work gives the pupil the language itself to deal with. He hears it, says it, reads it, learns it, and only after he has mastered some of the raw material does the systematizing of it begin. He is steeped in the foreign language and has as much to do with it as possible. In this way, he becomes acquainted with its elements, and absorbs many of them before he can distinguish the subject and predicate of a sentence. As the medium for class intercourse is French, the young pupil who has not outgrown the imitative stage is enabled to acquire much without conscious effort. The children themselves take pride in using no English, and enjoy making rules for themselves to this end. For instance, for ordinary class procedure, they agree that any one who uses English shall have extra home-work to do. On play days, the offender who forgets to use French is banished to the corridor and misses the fun. In this way, it becomes sort of a game to see who can avoid being caught, and if the children forget, they cheerfully pay the penalty. The exclusion of English from class, however, is not made a fetish. It is used in cases of unusual difficulty if time can be saved in that way; and it is used as a means of checking the pupil's knowledge. This is particularly necessary with young children who say and think they understand, when in reality, their ideas are very vague, or even entirely wrong. No formal translating from French to English and from English to French is done, however, as this interferes with concentration

on the French and hampers the acquisition of real language feeling. When the thought is expressed directly in French, the pupil is not confused by his own idiom; his attention is focused on the language he is studying; he has a single instead of double mental process to perform, and therefore, he attains his ends quickly and easily.

To avoid translation, the following types of exercises are employed through the grades:

- a. Oral and written answers are given to questions on a passage read from the text book.
- b. Questions are formulated by the student on a given passage.
- c. Stories that have been studied and learned are written from memory.
- d. Sentences describing a picture are composed and given orally or in writing.
- e. Sentences illustrating rules of grammar or introducing words or phrases that are to be impressed on the mind are composed and given orally or in writing.
- f. A story is re-written with a change of persons or tense.
- g. The substance, or a summary of a passage that has been learned or read, is produced orally.
- h. Sentences in which words have been omitted are completed. This device is used for many forms of drill in grammar.

Objects, pictures, actions, informal dramatizations, games and songs are used extensively in the beginning and throughout the course. The vocabulary deals with the daily life of the child in order that he may have the words he needs for his every day experiences, and in order that his interest and sense of actuality may be constantly appealed to.

THE COURSE IN DETAIL BY GRADES

Fourth Grade

In the fourth grade, French is elective, but his choice once made, the pupil must continue the subject through the remaining grades of the Elementary School.

In the first three grades, the child masters the elements of reading and writing in his mother tongue. He is ready, then, in the fourth grade to take up a foreign language without suffering the loss of time that would be experienced if he had not acquired these rudiments in his own language first.

It is advantageous to begin the study of a foreign language as early as the fourth grade because:

The speech organs are still flexible and reproduce the new sounds more easily than later.

The memory at this stage is very retentive.

The imitative stage is not outgrown.

The love of sounds for their own sake is still strong.

A child at this age does not weary of saying a thing over and over.

He is not self-conscious and embarrassed in trying to reproduce the strange sounds.

There is enough mental maturity to enable the student to gain more from his study than merely a new set of words for things that he can already name in English.

The habit of using a foreign language, if acquired at this age is seldom lost later.

Three years of experience in reading, speaking, and writing French, gives a broad basis on which to build the formal study of grammar.

The actual subject-matter acquired through the grades gives a knowledge of folk-lore, folk-songs, French customs, and music, which is seldom acquired by the more mature student in an elementary course, because of the pressure of time.

Aims and Methods

The fourth grade work emphasizes the acquisition of pronunciation and vocabulary. The instruction is mainly oral with special stress on sound placing, correct pronunciation, and rhythm.

Subject Matter

The vocabulary deals with (1) the objects in the room, (2) the parts of the body, (3) clothing, (4) actions, (5) colors, (6) prepositions of place, (7) numbers, (8) songs, (9) games, (10) pictures presenting scenes interesting at this age.

Nouns. About two hundred nouns are learned from these sources.

Verbs. They comprise principally those that the pupil can connect with and learn through actions, which he himself performs, such as: prendre, attraper, pouvoir, mettre, s'asseoir, se lever, tourner, écrire, planter, savoir, être, avoir, acheter, apporter, dormir, danser, écouter, parler, causer, rire, dire, aller, jouer, marcher, entrer, sortir, choisir, etc. They are used usually in the first and third persons singular, second person singular indicative, and in the imperative, as these are the persons and modes needed for class-room activities.

Numbers. The numbers from one to one hundred are learned and are used for counting in various ways, in telling time, and for doing simple problems in addition.

Prepositions. Those needed for class use, and those which indicate place,—sur, sous, devant, derrière, dans, entre, avec.

Reading. Through the first two quarters of the year, the children read only the phonetic script. When the sounds are firmly established through the phonetics, i.e. usually in the third quarter, the change to French orthography is made. A rhyme that has been learned by heart is used as a medium. Gradually the spellings for each sound are established (this part of the work carries over into the fifth grade). About six of Agnes Godfrey Gay's "*Cartes de Lectures Françaises*," and two or three simple stories are read. These stories are of such a nature that the child can get the ideas from pictures and actions. The story is first carefully studied, then learned, and finally parts of it are written from memory. (See method below.) The following is an example:

LE CORBEAU ET LE RENARD

(Adapted from La Fontaine's Fable)

Le corbeau est un oiseau. Il est grand. Il est noir. Il a un bec. Il est perché sur la branche d'un arbre. Il a un fromage dans le bec.

Le renard est un animal. Il aime le fromage. Il désire le fromage qui est dans le bec du corbeau. Il dit au corbeau: "M. Corbeau, vous êtes joli. Vous êtes beau. Vous avez une belle voix. Vous chantez bien, n'est-ce pas?"

Le renard est un flatteur. Le corbeau est flatté. Le corbeau désire chanter. Il désire montrer sa voix. Il ouvre son bec. Il chante et le fromage tombe. Le renard saisit le fromage. Il est heureux. Il va sous un arbre et mange le fromage. Le corbeau n'est pas heureux; il est triste.

The vocabulary of the story is first given with the aid of pictures. "*Les Fables de La Fontaine en Action*" by Bizeau are used. The nouns *corbeau*, *oiseau*, *bec*, *branche*, *arbre*, *fromage*, *renard*, *animal*, are studied first. When the class has learned these words, the story is told still with the help of the pictures, supplementing them with gestures and actions to explain the verbs and adjectives. It may be necessary to use English to make clear *n'est-ce pas*, *qui* and possibly *voix*, if the children do not understand these words from the French explanation. After the class has mastered the vocabulary, and the story has been understood from the oral presentation of it, the children read it. Then follow oral questions and answers of the following type:

Quel oiseau est-ce que c'est?

Qu'est-ce qu'un corbeau?

Est-il petit?

De quelle couleur est-il?
A-t-il une bouche?
Où est-il perché?
Qu'est-ce qu'il a dans le bec?

A minimum of ten songs, games, singing games, and rhymes, chosen from the following list, is learned by the class. More are given to a class that has linguistic ability.

Songs:

Frère Jacques (Folk-song)
Au Clair de la Lune (Folk-song)
A, B, C (Alphabet song)
Entre le Boeuf et l'Ane Gris (Christmas)
Voici c'que le P'tit Noël (Christmas)
Fais Dodo (Lullaby)
Nouvelles Agréables (Christmas)
Meunier, tu dors.
J'ai du bon Tabac.

Singing Games:

Savez-vous Planter les Choux (Parts of the body)
A Paris (Colors, names of places)
Promenons-nous dans les Bois (clothing)
Il Etait une Bergère. (Folk song)
La Mist en l'aire (musical instruments)
Les Marionnettes
Clic, clac (wooden shoes, school)
A la queue-leu-leu (sound placing)
La Tour Prends Garde

Games:

Papillon (sound placing, practice in use of disjunctive pronouns)
Le Chat et le Rat (free conversation within prescribed limits)
Petite Jeanneton (hand washing)
Que m'apportez-vous? (guessing game—review of nouns learned)
Enfant, qui vous tire les cheveux (disjunctive pronouns)

Rhymes:

Un, deux, trois,	}	Counting-out rhymes.
Nous allons au bois.		
Une poule sur un mur.		
Moi, toi, et le roi.		
Je te tiens.		
Combien ces six saucissons-ci?		
Rat vit riz.		
Cri, cri, cri.		
Didon dîna, dit-on.		
Do, ré, mi.		

In the last group the child's interest is in the sound; the pedagogic value lies in making the muscles flexible and the speech organs supple.

The objects in the class room furnish material for the vocabulary of the first lessons. With the nouns are given the prepositions of place *sur, sous, dans, devant, derrière, avec, and entre*. Things are moved about and the instruction is made as varied as possible until this vocabulary is mastered. The pupils learn the numbers in order to count the objects, the children in the class room, etc. In connection with the numbers, they learn the rhyme "Un, deux, trois." In order to have a purpose for using their counting-out rhyme, they learn the game called "Le Papillon." When the definite and indefinite articles for a number of nouns are learned, the names of the colors are studied. Here the children begin to observe the forms of words for the first time. There is no mention of the agreement of noun and adjective, for they know nothing of the parts of speech, but they are taught to observe correct usage. They learn that they must say *brun* with a *le* word, and *brune* with a *la* word. "A Paris" is taught in connection with the colors. With "Savez-vous Planter les Choux?" they review the names of the parts of the body. "Promenons-nous dans les Bois" is used in connection with the words for clothing. After the names of the letters have been learned and used for spelling words orally in French, the "A, B, C, Song" is taught.

When the classroom possibilities for enlarging the vocabulary are exhausted, the A. G. Gay "*Cartes de Lectures Françaises pour les Enfants Américains*" are taken up. These charts offer a picture on each sheet with a few sentences of reading matter below. The picture is used for the oral presentation of the vocabulary. The new words are written on the board in phonetic script, which gives the children an accurate conception of the sound, and serves for reference when they themselves read. After the children have learned the words from talking about the picture, they read the little paragraph below, and when they have mastered it, reproduce it in writing.

Verbs are taught through actions that the children can perform in the room. Some are taught through action series, some through games, others as necessary classroom activities make their use natural.

A TYPICAL FOURTH GRADE LESSON

This lesson presents one of the series used for teaching verbs through action. The instructor first gives the command, one child performs the action and tells what he does. Later, one pupil gives the command, a second performs the action, telling at the same time what he does, and a third describes what is done. The vocabulary of these series is applied in as many ways as possible in order to prevent monotony, introduce variety and keep the child alert.

The second person singular of the imperative is used to avoid difficulty. If the teacher says, "levez-vous" to the young student, he will be led by sound analogy to answer "je me levai." When the children have had more experience in differentiating sounds, the change is made to the formal *vous*, which they, as Americans, will have occasion to use most.

LA SÉRIE DE LA PORTE

<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Child</i>
Lève-toi	Je me lève
Viens ici	Je viens
Marche à la porte	Je marche à la porte
Prends le bouton	Je prends le bouton
Tourne le bouton	Je tourne le bouton
Ouvre la porte	J'ouvre la porte
Ferme la porte	Je ferme la porte
Retourne à ta place	Je retourne à ma place
Assieds-toi	Je m'assieds

VARIATION OF THE ABOVE

Lève-toi	Je me lève
Viens ici vite	Je viens vite
Prends le canif	Je prends le canif
Ouvre le canif	J'ouvre le canif
Prends le crayon	Je prends le crayon
Taille le crayon	Je taille le crayon
Ferme le canif	Je ferme le canif
Mets le canif et le crayon sur la table	Je mets le canif et le crayon sur la table
Retourne lentement à ta place	Je retourne lentement à ma place
Assieds-toi	Je m'assieds

The Standards of Attainment for the Fourth Grade

By the end of the year, the child should:

1. Know the names of the common objects round him.
2. Be able to form simple sentences telling where things are, or describe them simply.
3. Be able to count to 100 and do simple examples in addition.
4. Know the phonetic symbols, be able to spell the vowel sounds and the nasals, and be able to pronounce simple words at sight.
5. Know from ten to fifteen songs, games and rhymes.

FIFTH GRADE

Subject Matter and Methods

The study of sounds and their spelling continues. The children are trained in sureness of pronunciation by writing French words in phonetic script. This gives them an accurate knowledge of the sounds.

In the first two months, the A. G. Gay, "*Cartes de Lectures Françaises*," are completed. Then, Chapuzet and Daniels, "*Mes Premiers Pas en Français*," is used as a text. In this the pupils find much of the vocabulary learned in the fourth grade, but now they begin a very simple study of form and structure. As in the fourth grade, careful attention is still given to all articles. In addition, they study the agreement of the adjectives singular and plural, masculine and feminine, the plural of the regular nouns, and a few of the more common irregular ones, the endings of the first conjugation verbs in the present and second plural imperative as well as *avoir*, *être*, and *aller* in these same forms; the agreement of the subject and verb; and the negative and interrogative forms. This work is done without grammatical terminology in so far as possible in order to avoid all confusion.

The first fifty pages of the text book are studied. In subject matter, these treat of the following: the schoolroom, colors, numbers, the house and its parts, furniture, parts of the body, clothing, age, class procedure and French money.

In order to provide some less formal reading matter, and to introduce dialogue in natural form, a couple of Little French plays (of the type of the first three in Spink's "*French Plays for Children*"), so simple as to involve only the most rudimentary phrases, are offered. They provide the stimulating elements of play and action, and offer the opportunity for repetition and drill in rhythm which would prove irksome in any other form, but which given in this way are a means of arousing interest and effort.

In the second half of the year, Agnes Godfrey Gay's "*Mon Livre de Petites Histoires*" is used for reading, conversation and the transference back to French of English sentences based directly on the text. This cannot be called translation in the ordinarily accepted use of the term; it is vocabulary study in sentence form rather than in the form of disconnected words.

In this grade, the composition consists of answers to questions, sentences illustrating definite points in grammar, and very elementary descriptions of pictures, that enable the student to use sentences previously learned.

A TYPICAL FIFTH GRADE LESSON

The Study of the Article

As the child has learned in every lesson a number of substantives and the gender of each through the articles, and through the first year of his study has been held responsible for correct usage in this respect, the instructor now guides him to draw the grammatical principles out of his fund of speech material. From the many cases which the pupil has in memory, he is shown that the article in the singular has different forms for the masculine and feminine (*le, la*) which change to *les* in the plural, and further, before vowels *l'* is to be used. For the indefinite article he learns to know *un* and *une* with *des* for the plural. With the article, he acquires at the same time the plural of the noun in *s*. After the knowledge of this law is established through many examples, the pupil is required to show by his own examples that he knows how to use correctly the grammatical rule he has been studying. While the teacher reads several passages, and has the substantives that occur therein named with their articles, the child arranges them thus at the board:

le jour

les leçons

la montre

un enfant

une paire

des soldats

Then, on the basis of the knowledge acquired, the teacher has the other forms determined by the children, who must therefore draw conclusions.

From *le* to *les*

la to *les*

un to *le*

une to *la*

From *un* to *des*

une to *des*

les to *des*

les to *des*

so that the above scheme when completed becomes:

le jour	les jours	un jour	des jours
la leçon	les leçons	une leçon	des leçons
la montre	les montres	une montre	des montres
l'enfant	les enfants	un enfant	des enfants
la paire	les paires	une paire	des paires
le soldat	les soldats	un soldat	des soldats

In all succeeding lessons the children are held responsible for the gender of the important nouns as shown by the articles. In order to intensify interest in this very important phase of the work, "downs" are given from time to time after the nature of a spell down in which the teacher gives a list of nouns learned and the children supply the article.

Standards of Attainment

At the end of the fifth grade, the child should:

1. Know the names of common objects in school and home;
2. Be able to ask and answer simple questions orally and in writing;
3. Be able to count to one thousand, add and multiply, and use this knowledge in terms of French money;
4. Be able to analyze sounds and read simple material at sight;
5. Understand the agreement of adjectives (without grammatical nomenclature);
6. Understand and use correctly the present of *avoir*, *être*, *aller* and first conjugation verbs.

SIXTH GRADE

Subject Matter and Methods

In this year, the text book, "*Mes Premiers Pas en Français*" is completed.

In grammar, a large number of regular and irregular verbs are learned in the present tense; and the past and future tenses are touched upon. The comparison of regular adjectives, the demonstrative and interrogative adjectives, the ordinals, the negative expressions, and a fairly large number of idioms are studied.

The vocabulary is concerned with the street, shops, market, garden, buildings, animals, time, dates, days, months, seasons and their activities, the weather, letter-writing, meals, food, fruits, vegetables, and preparation for a trip; the departure, the train, the seashore; and the names of foreign countries and their inhabitants.

In this year the children acquire much more freedom in expression, and a good deal of attention is given to oral and written composition. This takes the form of description of pictures, summaries of stories read and studied, or immediate reproduction of a short story read aloud. There is constant use of questions and answers in French, of exercises that introduce given grammatical points or that require the use of particular words or phrases. Definitions in French are constantly asked for to test understanding, and antonyms are used as an aid in vocabulary development.

Guerber's "*Contes et Légendes*" is used in the second half of the year for rapid reading, oral summaries, and conversation. The play in this grade serves the same purpose as in the preceding years, but the vocabulary is larger and the play richer in thought content. For example, an historical play of the type of Jeanne d'Arc (Spink's "*French Plays for Children*") presents in simple form an advanced vocabulary, and offers an opportunity to study the life of a great French heroine, to become familiar with the history of the period, to examine French costumes of the Middle Ages, and to learn some of the legends and folk-songs of the time.

In this grade, the Phonetic Chart prepared by A. G. Bovée, is used to summarize and review the phonetic work done earlier in the course. The pupils are required to know the French spelling for each of the phonetic symbols, to write their own words and sentences in phonetics or transfer the phonetics back into French. This work has proved very helpful in improving the spelling as well as pronunciation.

A Typical Reading Lesson

Lesson XXI, page 63—"Mes Premiers Pas en Français"

Robert bâtit un village avec ses boîtes et ses cubes. Le papier brun est sur une chaise.

"Voilà une montagne," dit Marie. Je vais faire une rivière avec du papier d'argent. Voici la rivière qui descend de la montagne. Maintenant la rivière traverse le village."

"Je vais bâtir un pont sur la rivière," dit Robert. Il coupe du carton avec ses ciseaux et fait un pont. "C'est le pont d'Avignon," dit Marie, et Robert chante: "Sur le Pont d'Avignon."

Marie fait des petits bateaux en papier. Les bateaux flottent sur la rivière. Le long de la rivière Robert bâtit des maisons, des magasins et une école. Il fait une église au milieu du village.

Autour du village il fait des champs. Les champs sont en papier jaune et vert. Les champs verts sont des prés. Les champs jaunes sont des champs de blé.

"Maintenant, les animaux," dit Robert. "Où sont les animaux?"

"Je vais chercher mon arche de Noé," dit Marie.

"Il y a des ânes, des ours, des boeufs et des tigres dedans. "Bon," dit Robert, "dépêche-toi."

This forms a typical reading lesson for the Sixth Grade. From wall pictures made for the teaching of modern languages, ("*Tableau de Leçons de Choses, et de Langage*" Librairie A. Colin, Paris,) the new words are taught orally first. *Village, montagne, rivière, pont, église*, etc., are learned from seeing the representations of these things: *le long de, au milieu de, autour de, descend* and *traverse*, from actions. Next, the new words are written on the board in

phonetic symbols and the orthography is worked out, and studied. Then the new words as well as familiar ones are reviewed in questions and answers, the children themselves putting the questions and answering them, the instructor interfering only to correct or supply what they have overlooked. When the vocabulary is thoroughly mastered and each child understands and can use all the new words, one of the children is asked to describe the picture in his own words. The class criticises and supplements this recitation. This free oral composition gives independence and assurance. Next the book is opened and the lesson is read. After the oral preparation which has preceded, this proves an easy and pleasant task. Included in the lesson is the old folksong "Sur le Pont d'Avignon." The children are shown a picture of the bridge, and with the vocabulary at their command acquired from this and preceding lessons, they are able to understand a simple description in French of the bridge, the legend of its founding, a few statements about the Rhône, its source in Switzerland, and its mouth in the Mediterranean. They enjoy this part of the work very much because it draws them close to actualities and brings them in touch with the geography, legend, folk-lore and song of the country whose language they are studying. Then the song is learned and sung. For a home-work assignment, they are asked to write the answers to questions in their textbook which are based on the reading lesson. Finally the children are asked to write a description of the same picture of a village which was used for vocabulary study previously. They are encouraged to vary and enrich the vocabulary and phraseology as far as they can by using words and expressions learned in other connections.

This lesson also serves as a basis for the review of animals and for teaching the use of the infinitive after the verb *aller*.

Standards of Attainment

At the end of the sixth grade, the pupil should:

1. Read freely, with understanding and good pronunciation, the simple stories of the grade and prove his comprehension of them by his oral answers and his discussion.
2. Be able to analyze sounds phonetically and apply his knowledge of sound in correctly pronouncing new words.
3. Have acquired considerable facility in speech and considerable knowledge of correct form.

SEVENTH GRADE

Introductory Statement

The work of grades four, five and six has given to the children a natural background, a broad experience full of interest and atmosphere, some of the cultural side of the language through songs, rhymes, folk-tales and customs, some natural feeling for what is correct in form and usage, and freedom and lack of self-

consciousness in the use of the language, as well as certain rudiments of grammar.

Up to the seventh grade, the pupils have been interested principally in words as conveyors of ideas rather than in words in their relation to each other. To round out the fund of knowledge that they have acquired, there must now come a more intensive study of the laws underlying what they have felt as correct in order to give them the power of reasoning in the domain of language, and to provide a working tool which will make them more independent in the use of the French they know and open the way for further knowledge.

The pupils have now matured sufficiently to reason along grammatical lines and they have therefore reached the point where they should learn *why* they use certain forms which their ear tells them are correct.

Subject Matter and Methods

The subject-matter of the seventh grade course is essentially the same as that of the first year of High School, but the method of treatment differs to meet the requirements of younger students who have had three years of French. The instruction which formerly dealt with nouns, adjectives and verbs as vocabulary begins now to review this vocabulary from a grammatical standpoint, and to center the interest intensively about the study of the verb. First action series, which were learned in the Fourth Grade, are used again, but are studied now with the main stress on the grammatical structure of the verb. The names of the parts of the body which were studied in the fourth and fifth grades are reviewed for the sake of learning the forms of the verbs which may be joined to each one, e.g.

Je parle avec la bouche
Je vois avec les yeux
J'écris avec la main, etc.

Then come sentence series describing the activities of the day. The study of the verbs involved in each is the main point for consideration.

The verbs are divided into two large groups according to the infinitive endings, and the endings in the present tense. Later, when this large grouping is clearly fixed in mind, the verbs are divided into the four conjugations, thus simplifying the study of the different

verb classifications. Early in the year, the use of the infinitive after certain verbs and prepositions is given and stressed all through the course by means of direct application rather than by rules.

Then follows a series of "*Stories of Every Day Life*" by A. G. Bovée, which introduce constructions from which grammatical laws are gradually deduced. These stories also present the ordinary terms of every-day phraseology and a number of useful idioms. After these stories have been thoroughly mastered from oral presentation, they are used for written work. The phrases occurring in them are used throughout the year in various connections. Much of the material acquired in the preceding grades recurs now to be considered from the new point of view, thus fixing the vocabulary of earlier years firmly in the mind and broadening the comprehension of it.

To supplement the oral stories, Gourio's "*La Classe en Français*" is used for drill in form. This offers material for exercises in dictation and training in grammar by means of sentences to be filled out by the student; a device which obviates the necessity for translation. The vocabulary of this book, having been largely acquired through earlier work, the pupil can readily concentrate on the grammatical forms. In this manner, that is, by becoming familiar with the grammatical constructions by actually using them, and later deducing the underlying law, the remaining points of elementary grammar are covered:

The four regular conjugations of the verb (excluding the subjunctive).

About fifty irregular verbs.

The reflexive verb.

The rules for the past participle.

The study of the use of the *présent*, *passé indéfini*, *imparfait*, and *futur* with a reading knowledge of the *conditionnel* and *passé défini*.

The use of the infinitive.

The regular and common irregular adjectives.

The comparison of adjectives, regular and irregular.

The possessive and demonstrative adjectives.

The use of the partitive.

The pronouns, personal, possessive and demonstrative.

In order not to dampen by a too exclusive study of form and structure, the enthusiasm acquired earlier, Méras', "*Le Premier Livre*" is used for rapid reading. This supplies material for word development, that is, the study of words by families, for the study of synonyms, antonyms, definitions, etc.

The study of phonetics continues and forms the basis of all new reading material.

The formal work is varied on one day in the week by songs, games, and the telling of stories. Through these stories, which are given purely for enjoyment and appreciation, an effort is made to familiarize the student with some of the great names in French history and story, and to acquaint him with some of the traditions of France. This gives the children the opportunity to hear French spoken, consecutively once a week, continues the ear training, keeps the mind alert, and gives them a glimpse of what they may enjoy with further study.

The pupils who do satisfactory work enter the High School course known as French 8. This class is made up of students from the Elementary School who are kept by themselves in order to enable the instructor to retain and make use of their past linguistic experience, their vocabulary and their facility in conversation and reading while pursuing the second year course.

A TYPICAL SEVENTH GRADE LESSON

This lesson is planned to teach the pupils the use of the expressions of time, to give them a series of useful verbs connected with the day's activities and to introduce the reflexive verb.

A clock face is used in explaining the time expressions, and actions, pictures and objects make clear the remaining words in the lesson.

The series presented is: (From "*Stories of Every Day Life*").

A sept heures je dors.

A sept heures cinq, je me réveille et je me frotte les yeux.

A sept heures dix je me lève.

A sept heures et quart je m'habille.

A sept heures vingt je me lave les mains et la figure et je me brosse les dents et les cheveux.

A sept heures vingt-cinq je me regarde dans le miroir.

A sept heures et demie je descends à la salle à manger et je me mets à table.

A huit moins le quart je prends mon petit déjeuner.

A huit heures je quitte la table.

A huit heures cinq je mets mon chapeau.

A huit heures dix je sors de la maison.

Je (marche à l'école.

(vais

A huit heures vingt j'arrive à l'école.

A huit heures vingt-cinq je cherche mes livres dans mon cahier.

A huit heures et demie j'entre dans la salle de classe.

A neuf heures moins le quart la classe commence.

The children have learned their numbers in preceding classes and know the hours and half hours. These are rapidly reviewed. No special attention has been paid heretofore to the smaller divisions of the hour. These are now taken up and the entire subject of the telling of time is reviewed in connection with the series given above. New words are first acquired by the sound, are written in phonetic symbols and finally transposed to French orthography. The verbs are divided into two groups (Group I—verbs in *er*, Group II—all the others) and the present endings are grouped according to this classification. The verbs are worked over until every child is familiar with them orally and in writing. When the series is pretty well learned, it is dictated to the class and assigned for home work. After another recitation on it, the children are asked to write answers to such questions as:

Que faites-vous à huit heures?

À quelle heure prenez-vous votre petit déjeuner?

À quelle heure allez-vous à l'école? etc.

In teaching the reflexive verbs, the child readily understands *je me regarde*, *je m'habille*, *je me lave*, but in *je me frotte les yeux*, *je me brosse les cheveux*, etc., he learns to accept what is correct and typical in a language different from his own.

Later in the year, this same series is used as a basis for the study of the *passé indéfini*.

STANDARDS OF ATTAINMENT

At the end of the seventh grade, the pupil is expected:

1. To be able to analyze with accuracy, according to phonetic rules, *any* French word and apply this knowledge in a correct pronunciation.
2. To know the four regular conjugations of the verbs and the common irregular ones.
3. To understand the use and application of the facts of elementary grammar.
4. To be quick and accurate in acquiring new words and ideas from sound alone.
5. To understand spoken French of not too advanced a character.
6. To be able to read simple French with ease in pronunciation and comprehension.
7. To be able to give intelligent *résumés* (oral and written) of the stories read and told to the class.
8. To take dictation of simple French accurately.

THE TEXTS USED IN THE GRADES

IV

Gay: Cartes de Lectures Françaises pour les enfants Américains.
Spink: French Plays for Children (D. C. Heath).

V

Chapuzet & Daniels: Mes Premiers Pas en Français (D. C. Heath).
Gay: Mon Livre de Petites Histories (W. R. Jenkins Co.).
Spink: French Plays for Children (D. C. Heath).

VI

Chapuzet & Daniels: Mes Premiers Pas en Français.
Guerber: Contes et Légendes I (American Book Co.).
Spink: French Plays for Children.
Bovée: Carte Phonétique.

VII

Gourio: La Classe en Français (Ferran, Jeune, Marseille).
Méras: Le Premier Livre (American Book Co.).
Bovée: Carte Phonétique.
Bovée: Stories of Every Day Life.

THE GERMAN ADJECTIVE AND THE USE OF UMLAUT IN ITS COMPARISON

A careful examination of about thirty German grammars and books for beginners has disclosed, in reference to umlaut in comparison of adjectives, a rather startling prevalence of mis-statement—even at the best, very inadequate statements. Ranging all the way from the unqualified and incorrect statement of Professor Greenfield's "Summary" to the careful, but yet unsatisfactory, one of Professor Curme in his large "Grammar of the German Language," these books all leave the subject in a condition very cloudy for most teachers, and certainly obscure for either a school or college student. I quote from about one-third of the grammars which I have examined in the course of this study:

1. ALLEN AND PHILLIPSON'S *A First German Grammar*.

"Many adjectives with the stem-vowel a, o, or u modify the stem-vowel in the comparative and superlative respectively to ä, ö, or ü."

2. BAGSTER-COLLINS' *First Book in German*.

"Most common adjectives of one syllable whose stem-vowel is a, o, or u (not au), take Umlaut in the comparative and superlative."